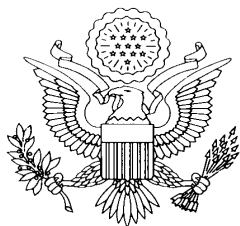


AFRICA NEWS REPORT



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AEF305 02/04/2004

New U.S. Aid Corporation Names 63 Potentially Eligible Countries

(Countries' commitment to development will be evaluated, group says) (920)

The new U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) has released the names of 63 countries eligible to compete for funds from a new foreign aid account.

The first candidate countries for Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) funding are those that have a maximum average per capita income of \$1,415 and are eligible for assistance from the World Bank's no-interest lending arm, the International Development Association (IDA), according to a February 3 MCC press release.

Next, the MCC will evaluate the countries based on "a rigorous assessment of their commitment to development," the release said.

"The MCA is an unprecedented assistance program initiated by President Bush that has received wide bipartisan support and \$1 billion in funding for FY 2004 [fiscal year 2004] from Congress," the release stated.

The MCA will be used to support projects "that encourage long-run, sustained economic growth" necessary for achieving "lasting poverty reduction," said Under Secretary of State Alan Larson, during a February 3 press briefing. Larson is the MCC's interim chief executive officer (CEO).

The corporation -- which had its first meeting February 2 -- is chaired by Secretary of State Colin Powell and so far includes Treasury Secretary John Snow, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Andrew Natsios. Five additional members and a permanent chief executive officer (CEO) will be named later, according to recent MCC statements.

Following is the text of the MCC press release:

February 3, 2004

Millennium Challenge Account Is Launched

The Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) met on February 2, 2004 to launch this new U.S. Government corporation that will administer the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). The MCA is an unprecedented assistance program initiated by President Bush that has received wide bipartisan support and \$1 billion in funding for FY 2004 [fiscal year 2004] from Congress.

The Board is chaired by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and includes Secretary of the Treasury John Snow as Vice Chairman, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, and USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios. Five additional members will be named later. The Board took a number of actions, including:

-- Naming an interim CEO -- Ambassador Alan Larson, Under Secretary of State for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs;

-- Approving the list of candidate countries that can compete for MCA assistance. The candidate countries for FY04 are those countries that have a per capita income of \$1415 or less, are eligible to borrow from the World Bank's International Development Association, and are not ineligible to receive United States economic assistance under part 1 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 or any other provision of law (see attached list);

-- Approving the bylaws for the corporation.

In his opening remarks, Secretary Powell noted that the MCC demonstrated America's commitment to the principle that,

"People matter. The plight of the world's poor presents all of us with a profound moral challenge. Alleviating their suffering also holds profound implications for freedom and security across the globe. For a world in which ordinary people have hope for the future is a world in which democracy and prosperity will spread and tyrants and terrorists cannot thrive."

Secretary Snow added: "I want to thank Congress for working with the Administration to make a reality the President's vision of an assistance program that rewards countries that govern justly, invest in their citizens, and promote economic freedom."

More information on MCA is available at www.mcc.gov <<http://www.mcc.gov>>.

Candidate Countries for Millennium Challenge Account in FY 2004

The Millennium Challenge Act of 2003 provides that, during FY 2004, countries shall be able to compete for funding from the Millennium Challenge Account if they:

-- are eligible for assistance from the International Development Association;

-- have a per capita income equal to or less than the historic ceiling of the International Development Association (or \$1415 for FY 2004); and

-- are not subject to legal provisions that prohibit them from receiving United States economic assistance under Part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

The Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation has identified the candidate countries below as able to compete for funding for FY 2004. These candidate countries will later be evaluated by the MCC Board to determine whether they should be able to submit proposals for MCC funding, based on a rigorous assessment of their commitment to development. The quality of proposals submitted will also be evaluated and final funding decisions then made.

1. Afghanistan
2. Albania
3. Angola
4. Armenia
5. Azerbaijan
6. Bangladesh
7. Benin
8. Bhutan
9. Bolivia
10. Bosnia and Herzegovina
11. Burkina Faso
12. Cameroon
13. Cape Verde
14. Chad
15. Comoros
16. Congo, Dem. Rep.
17. Congo, Rep. (Brazzaville)
18. Djibouti
19. East Timor
20. Eritrea
21. Ethiopia
22. Gambia
23. Georgia
24. Ghana
25. Guinea
26. Guyana
27. Haiti
28. Honduras
29. India
30. Indonesia

31. Kenya
32. Kiribati
33. Kyrgyz Republic
34. Lao PDR
35. Lesotho
36. Madagascar
37. Malawi
38. Mali
39. Mauritania
40. Moldova
41. Mongolia
42. Mozambique
43. Nepal
44. Nicaragua
45. Niger
46. Nigeria
47. Pakistan
48. Papua New Guinea
49. Rwanda
50. Sao Tome and Principe
51. Senegal
52. Sierra Leone
53. Solomon Islands
54. Sri Lanka
55. Tajikistan
56. Tanzania
57. Togo
58. Tonga
59. Uganda
60. Vanuatu
61. Vietnam
62. Yemen, Rep.
63. Zambia

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs,
U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF501 02/06/2004

Nations Rally to Support Liberia

(Conference raises the money needed for reconstruction) (1060)

By Judy Aita

Washington File United Nations Correspondent

United Nations -- The international community responded overwhelmingly to Liberia's call for help February 6, overflowing the U.N. room where a donors' conference was being held and pledging 80 percent of its goal of \$488 million for reconstruction after only two pledges were made.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, a co-sponsor of the International Reconstruction Conference on Liberia, arrived from Washington with a pledge of \$200 million for humanitarian and reconstruction needs and another \$245 million for U.N. peacekeeping operations in the country. The money was in addition to more than \$90 million the United States has already contributed to Liberian aid.

"President Bush is totally dedicated to this task, and our efforts in Liberia are fully supported by the American Congress as well as the American people. I assure you of full American support," Powell told C. Gyude Bryant, chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia.

Bryant called the event "a great day for us."

"It marks a new beginning for us and we assure you that the help you have given today, and those who have rallied here today in our support, will be used to sustain peace [and] to start a

new Liberia where we can live at peace with ourselves and our neighbors and make our West Africa region a better place for everybody," Bryant said.

The United States, the United Nations, and the World Bank co-hosted a two-day International Reconstruction Conference on Liberia February 5 and 6. The first day was devoted to discussing the assessment of the country's needs drawn up over the past two months by a team of representatives from the U.N., the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Liberian transitional government. The second day was a ministerial-level pledging conference attended by 106 nations.

In his speech to the conference, Powell said that "the citizens of Liberia now have the opportunity to put 15 years of war, chaos, and misery behind them and to build a future of hope. This promising moment is not likely to come again. And the people of Liberia need our collective help to seize this moment.

"Our help will mean a new chance at life for the men, women, and children of Liberia who have seen so much death and destruction," the secretary said.

"I hope that our own and other contributions will help prompt a broadened, substantial international response in the form of funds, technical assistance, and active diplomatic engagement," he said. "Having helped Liberia to this hopeful point of peace we as a world community now must be prepared to commit ourselves to the long, hard process of Liberia's recovery and reconstruction."

"Ultimately, of course, it is up to the Liberians themselves to seize or to squander this moment," Powell said.

Thanking the conference's sponsors, The European Union and Japan, Bryant added his appreciation for the hospitality of the people of the City of New York.

"We have a valuable lesson to learn from New York City," the chairman said. "From the most devastating attack on the free world, this great American city has begun to rebuild from 'Ground Zero.' Liberia is today at ground zero. And like this great city, we are resolved and determined to rebuild Liberia.

"I assure you that Liberia will rise again. I know this because there is now a concerted solidarity running across the broadest spectrum of Liberians that political violence will no longer return to Liberia. It is time to heal the wounds, reconcile our people and commence, in honest, the process of national renewal," Bryant said.

Officials of the World Bank, the U.N. Development Program (UNDP) and other agencies said that Liberia needs \$487.7 million, divided between \$243 million for 2004 and \$244.7 million for 2005. (An additional \$179.1 million is needed for emergency humanitarian aid.) The money is to be used for programs ranging from demobilizing combatants and helping them return home, get schooling and find jobs to rebuilding roads, restoring electricity, reopening health centers, stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS and organizing elections in 2005.

The United States' pledge of \$200 million was followed by a pledge of another \$200 million by the European Community.

Mark Malloch Brown, administrator of the U.N. Development Program (UNDP), called the funding-raising effort "an extraordinary commitment."

"With the pledges already this morning and by the end of this afternoon the final number is going to look very dramatic," Malloch Brown said at a press conference at midday. "We defied the skeptics who have said there is aid fatigue, there is exhaustion with African crises, [or] monies have been siphoned off for Iraq or Afghanistan.

"We've shown that where there is a strong, effective initiative by a new government to get its house in order, to put in place a strong plan for its reconstruction, and where that is supported by the international donors and support by a multilateral effort ... it still works," he said.

"In that conference room today we were all Liberians and anxious to see this succeed and recognized that this is just the beginning. Even with the resources it will be tough," the UNDP administrator said. "Huge challenges lie ahead, and this is not the end of the process.

"This is not the moment to declare victory but an enormously important step is crossed today with a successful donors' conference. Chairman Bryant can return home feeling that he has the international community and international support behind him," he said.

Andrew Natsios, administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), said that Liberia now has the "critical factors" needed for successful reconstruction and peace: money, international peacekeepers to help with security, and strong Liberian leadership.

Strong Liberian leadership is needed "because if this is not owned by the Liberians it is going to be a failure. It cannot be imposed by the outside," Natsios said. "It is very clear to us in the community that deals with reconstruction that we have that leadership now. We have ministers [and] a competent and strong leader in Chairman Bryant at the national helm."

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF502 02/06/2004

Powell Sees "a Brighter Future" for Liberia

(February 6 stakeout at U.N. following Liberian Donors Conference) (2930)

Speaking to the news media February 6 after the Liberian Donors Conference in New York, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell reiterated the United States' full commitment to assisting Gyude Bryant, chairman of the Liberian Transitional Government, in "leading the people of Liberia to a brighter future."

Chairman Bryant said the U.S. role "marks a new beginning for us," and that the donors' assistance "will be used to sustain the peace, to start a new Liberia where we can live at peace ... and make our West Africa region a better place for everybody."

In response to a question on Liberia's debt, Powell said he would "have to talk to [his] colleagues in Washington with respect to what we might be able to do with debt reduction efforts for Liberia. And I'll be discussing this with [U.S. Treasury] Secretary Snow and others."

Following is the transcript of Powell's exchange with reporters:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of the Spokesman

For Immediate Release

February 6, 2004

2004/132

Remarks

By Secretary of State Colin L. Powell at the

Stakeout at UN after Liberian Donors Conference

February 6, 2004

New York, New York

11:45 a.m. EST

SECRETARY POWELL: It's a great pleasure for me to be at the

United Nations on this occasion when the international community comes together to show its support for the people of Liberia, and I am very pleased to have had the opportunity to be with Chairman Bryant, who is leading his people, leading the people of Liberia to a brighter future.

I noted earlier that the United States is fully committed to this effort, \$200 million in the 2004 supplemental, in addition to some \$90-odd-million already contributed to Liberia's efforts over the last couple of years, and over \$245 million of U.S. money to UN peacekeeping operations.

And with peace in Liberia, and with progress in Cote d'Ivoire, and progress in Sierra Leone, progress in Sudan, progress continues on the -- between Ethiopia and Eritrea that's now on its way to settlement, the borders resolved, and some movement in Somalia, we've seen a number of conflict areas coming under control.

I think more and more leaders in Africa and throughout the international community recognize that we must end these conflicts to bring peace to the region so that development can begin. And I have conveyed to Chairman Bryant that President Bush is totally dedicated to this task, and that our efforts in Liberia are fully supported by the American Congress, as well as the American people.

And so, Mr. Chairman, I congratulate you for what you have been doing and for the work that is before you, and can assure you of full American support.

CHAIRMAN BRYANT: Thank you, Secretary Powell.

SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you, sir

CHAIRMAN BRYANT: Thank you. Thank you very much. We are grateful in Liberia for today. We're particularly grateful for the role that you and your government, President Bush, continue to play. This day is a great day for us. It marks a new beginning for us, and we assure you that the help you're giving today and everybody else in the world, who has rallied here today in our support, will be used to sustain the peace, to start a new Liberia where we can live at peace with ourselves and our neighbors and make our West Africa region a better place for everybody.

Thank you so much.

SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you very much.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary --

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary --

QUESTION: -- you said a couple of weeks ago that while you have a good relationship with the French Foreign Ministry, you're about to have lunch with, you know, sometimes they get under our skin, and, likewise, vice versa. Do you have an allergy today or do you think things are looking up?

SECRETARY POWELL: I look forward to having a good conversation with Foreign Minister de Villepin. We have many things to cover. Last year, at this time, it was a difficult, it was a difficult time and we were not on the same wavelength.

This year, I think we are in agreement that what we have to do is work to help the people of Iraq build a democracy to transfer sovereignty to the Iraqi people as quickly as that is possible. And, as you know, our November 15th plan calls for that to be done by the 30th of June, and I'm sure Foreign Minister de Villepin and I will discuss that in considerable detail. We'll discuss the potential role of NATO in Iraq and a variety of other bilateral issues, and I'm looking forward to seeing the Minister.

QUESTION: You can go --

SECRETARY POWELL: Excuse me.

Andrea.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, why is the United States

accepting the agreement, the plea deal, basically, in Pakistan? Why isn't the United States more concerned about this pardon of A.Q. Khan, given what we know about his proliferation to Libya, possibly Iran, certainly, North Korea?

It seems as though we're sending the wrong signal to proliferators around the world. And he is the biggest.

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, the biggest is now gone, so I think that is a remarkable success.

QUESTION: Without punishment?

SECRETARY POWELL: The biggest is now gone, and so we don't have to worry about proliferation from Mr. A.Q. Khan or his network. And this is a success for the international community, for those of us who have been pressing all governments to go after these kinds of proliferators. And I'm pleased that President Musharraf realized that he had to do something about this network.

Now the action he took with respect to pardoning Mr. Khan is something that he felt it was appropriate for him to do and he has explained his position thoroughly. I expect to be talking to President Musharraf over the next several days to make sure that there is a full understanding of what the A.Q. Khan network has done over the years so that there are no remnants of it left, and then there's no possibility of further proliferating activities coming out of that network.

And that's our goal, number one, with respect to his accountability and this is a matter between Mr. Khan, who is a Pakistani citizen and his government. But it is a matter also that I'll be talking to President Musharraf about.

QUESTION: Just a follow-up, do you think that Mr. Musharraf did not know? Could Musharraf not have known?

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, would you be able to talk about the damage that's been done to the U.S. diplomatic relations with the international community in the wake of the Gulf War before and after? What do you see that needs to be done to repair the damage to improve America's standing, both with our allies who weren't with us on the war and with the international community?

SECRETARY POWELL: I think we're doing very well with the international community, notwithstanding the premise of your question. Here in the UN over the last five or six months, we've passed resolution after resolution supporting what we are trying to do in Iraq. We are here for an important international conference to help Liberia. We've been engaged with our friends in finding a solution to the situation, troubled situation in Sudan, and we're close to that solution.

Congress has provided funding to assist with peacekeeping operations around the world. We've just announced that we're working with our friends in Asia to get the six-party talks started again to deal with the North Korean nuclear situation. So if you look at what we're doing, you will see that we are working with our friends and allies around the world. We had meetings last week with the new Secretary General of NATO, and NATO has made its top priority enhancing our capability to deal with the situation in Afghanistan. NATO is playing an important role there. NATO is now considering how it might play a role in Iraq. Secretary Rumsfeld is in Munich today talking to our NATO colleagues and other influential people in Europe.

So we're reaching out. I'm meeting with Foreign Minister de Villepin today. So rather than saying we have all these estrangements with our friends and allies around the world, I would say it's quite the contrary. We had a major disagreement last year. But, you know, disagreements come, disagreements go. And now we are all working together to press for peace and development and democracy and human rights around the world, and the end of regional conflicts and the elimination of proliferation.

Look what happened in Libya recently as a result of our working with the United Kingdom, or some of the initial steps that have been taken with respect to Iranian proliferation as a result of us working with European foreign ministers as well as with the IAEA. And so I think the record is really quite contrary to the premise of your question.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, last year, when you came here last year, you presented a case to the Security Council, the intelligence of which has been questionable and reviewed. Do you feel that you owe an apology to the Security Council now that we know what we know, or do you feel that you are owed an apology by those who provided you such intelligence?

SECRETARY POWELL: I don't think any apologies are necessary. As Director Tenet said yesterday, when he prepared the Intelligence Estimate that was presented to the American Congress in the fall of 2002, it represented a solid body of advice, solid body of information that had been collected by analysts and other sources, and it was from that national intelligence estimate that we drew the material that I presented here a year ago yesterday. Director Tenet was here with me. It represented the best judgment we could make at that time on Saddam Hussein's activities.

And what did we know then? And what did we present? We said that this was a regime led by a dictator who had every intention of keeping his weapons of mass destruction programs going, and anyone who thinks he didn't is just dead wrong. And there is no evidence to suggest that that was an incorrect judgment. He had used them in the past and it was clear if given the opportunity he would use them in the future if it served his purpose. We also knew that he had the capability. He had the people who knew how to do it. He had done it in the past. He had the infrastructure. He had the dual-use facilities. We knew that he was working on these matters. What we weren't sure of and what we didn't entirely, couldn't be absolutely sure, was the nature of his stockpiles. And so it's the stockpile question that we are still examining, and as Director Tenet said yesterday, the work is continuing.

And so the information that was available to us, available to other nations around the world, the intelligence base on which our decision rested was a solid intelligence base when we presented the case to the United Nations in September, the year before last and when the President took his action, and his action was totally justified by the information that he had, the intelligence he was provided, the record of this individual, and the one thing we don't have to worry about now is whether there are any weapons of mass destruction or a Saddam Hussein in Iraq to use them. They are both going to be gone now and we'll not have to worry about this. Now we ought to be worrying about -- now what we need to be worrying about is how quickly we can turn over sovereignty and let the Iraqi people build a democracy that we can all be proud of.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, (inaudible) to forgive Iraq's debt, but when you look at debt reduction when it comes to Liberia, it doesn't even seem to be on the table, yet we're looking at jumpstarting the country's economy. Do you think that debt reduction should be on the table for Liberia?

SECRETARY POWELL: There are a number of programs that deal with debt reduction, and obviously, we want to do everything we can to assist the Liberians as they get started. We're putting a lot of money into Liberia now. That's why we're here now. I'd have to talk to my colleagues in Washington with respect to what we might be able to do with debt reduction efforts for Liberia. And I'll be discussing this with Secretary Snow and others.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, your recent successes in North Africa and elsewhere on the continent, to what extent were

they designed, wittingly or unwittingly, to undermine French foreign policy in those parts?

(Laughter.)

SECRETARY POWELL: It was not our intention to undermine the foreign policy of any of our friends. What we tried to do was to persuade all of our friends that our mutual interest would be served by policies that took on regimes like Saddam Hussein and pointed out to the world where there were nations that were proliferating weapons of mass destruction, and not hide from it, and point it out to the world that we needed to come together to fight terrorism. And those common policies, I think, are now gaining more and more currency, and more and more people are coming together recognizing that this is the way we should work.

And in no meeting that I ever sit in, or even late at night all by myself, did I sit around thinking, "How can I undercut some other nation's foreign policy?" I'm responsible for my own, and to the extent that I develop that foreign policy for the President, his foreign policy which he executes in the name of the American people, to the extent that I can get friends and partners to join in on the President's foreign policy agenda, that's my job and that's what I try to do.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, could the June 30th sovereignty date slide, could be pushed back? Are you ruling it out?

SECRETARY POWELL: Right now, we're sticking with the plan, the 15 November plan of a 30 June turnover.

Now, Secretary General Annan has announced that he's sending a team in, and we are anxious for the team to go in, do its work and see what report they bring out. But right now, we are remaining with the 30 June sovereignty date based on the 15 November plan.

QUESTION: If they were to come back, saying, as Secretary General Kofi Annan has just said, that their conclusions and the consensus in Iraq is that the date should be moved, would you then be willing to move the June 30th date?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, I don't want to get into what they might report and what we might do with their report. Let's wait and see what their report says.

And, of course, we would take whatever they say into account as we move forward, but for now we're sticking with the plan and the Governing Council is sticking with the plan. They're hard at work on the administrative law and hard at work at the other elements of the 15 November plan.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, what do you expect from France on the Iraqi issue?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, I expect that Dominique de Villepin and I will have a good discussion. I am sure we will talk about the possibility of NATO involvement, and I am sure the Minister will have some ideas with respect to returning sovereignty and a timetable. But I wouldn't prejudge what we might discuss. I'm looking forward to a full and long discussion with the Minister over lunch.

Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, do you believe that the opposition in countries like France and Russia to the war may have been influenced by possible payments that were made by the Saddam Hussein regime --

SECRETARY POWELL: I have no idea, and I don't want to speculate about it. I assume in those countries there were legitimate points of view that were in opposition to what we were trying to do.

I hope that as people see that the United States and its coalition partners are working hard now to stand this country up so that it can be run by its own leaders, its own people, as quickly as

possible, and that we're investing a great deal of money and we're taking -- we're taking risks with the lives of our young men and women and losing lives to do this, and the Iraqis are losing lives as we do this, I hope that in all of these nations that were opposed to us, or where there was strong public opposition, they will now recognize that we have eliminated a horrible dictator who filled mass graves and did other terrible things to humanity. He's gone. He's not going to be back.

And one can argue about what weapons were there, what weapons were not there, or who knew what when, but the reality is that now what we should be spending our energy and time focusing on is how to build this country into the kind of democracy that the people would be proud of, the region will be proud of and the world will be proud of.

Thank you very much.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF503 02/06/2004

Powell Asks International Community to Help Liberia Gain Lasting Peace

(Supporting head of Liberia's Transitional Government is crucial, he says) (2380)

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell told the International Reconstruction Conference on Liberia, meeting at the United Nations in New York, "The United States is determined to help the long-suffering people of Liberia find the path to lasting peace."

Among the efforts that the international community must undertake to help Liberia, he said, is the rehabilitation of child soldiers so they can find their families, attend school and leave "their nightmare pasts behind them ... If we help these deeply traumatized children to live in hope, then there is hope also for Liberia," Powell said.

He called on Liberians to "seize ... this moment" and urged all parties to join the leader of Liberia's Transitional Government, Chairman Gyude Bryant, in supporting the Accra Peace Accord brokered by ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States), which led to the withdrawal of rebel forces from the capital, Monrovia. "We have given substantial assistance to the ongoing deployment of United Nations forces within Liberia, who are helping to stabilize the peace and secure the flow of humanitarian aid," Powell said.

The countries of West Africa have suffered from "deeply interconnected crises and conflicts that have common roots in corruption and criminality," Powell continued. "Now, West African countries must grasp the opportunity to form healthy ties of commerce and cooperation that will help them address the ills that have led to past violence.

"Holding to account those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity is an essential part of the healing process," Powell said, singling out former President Charles Taylor for his criminal actions in Sierra Leone. Taylor, he said, "should address the charges against him in the Special Court for Sierra Leone."

Following is the transcript of Powell's remarks:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of the Spokesman

February 6, 2004

As Delivered

REMARKS

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell At The International Reconstruction Conference on Liberia

February 6, 2004
 United Nations Headquarters
 New York, New York
 (10:50 a.m. EST)

SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank you for that very startling introduction.

(Laughter.)

It is a great pleasure to be here, and I would like to express my regrets for being a little late arriving this morning, but we circled over New York for about an hour and a half before my very capable Air Force pilots found a hole in the clouds that allowed us to descend to Kennedy, and then thanks to New York City's finest, we were able to do a quick trip into the city and to be with you this morning.

I am honored to join the Secretary General, Vice President Madavo of the World Bank in hosting this important conference in support of Liberia's recovery from 15 years of brutal warfare. As President Bush has said, the United States is determined to help the long-suffering people of Liberia to find a path to lasting peace.

The deeply interconnected conflicts in West Africa have laid waste to precious lives and to the region's natural bounty. Some 200,000 people have died in Liberia alone. As the violence spread throughout the region, so, too, have destruction, disease and despair. Millions of West Africans were driven out of their homes, as thugs, traffickers and terrorists rushed in to exploit the havoc, to exploit that havoc for their own ends, posing threats to the wider international community.

Clearly, the killing and the chaos had to stop, and the international community responded and took action. I commend the Economic Community of West African States, the United Kingdom and France for their leadership in the international efforts to restore security in Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire. I also wish to applaud the dedicated efforts of Nigeria and Ghana to find regional solutions to the conflicts in West Africa.

In Liberia, the United Nations and its specialized agencies, the Economic Community of West African States, the European Commission, our fellow members of the International Contact Group, non-governmental organizations and, most important of all, courageous Liberians have worked in partnership to advance three key goals. First, we have come together to help put an end to the violence that has devastated the country and destabilized the region. Second, we have facilitated the flow of humanitarian aid. And, third, we have given our support to those in Liberia who are working for fundamental reform of the way that Liberia is governed. The United States is proud to have contributed to all of these efforts.

The citizens of Liberia now have the opportunity to put fifteen years of war, chaos and misery behind them and to build a future of hope. This promising moment is not likely to come again. And the people of Liberia need our collective help to seize this moment.

Our help will mean a new chance at life for the men, women and children of Liberia who have seen so much death and destruction.

A Liberia at peace will be critical to peace and well-being throughout the West African region.

And Liberia's successful reconstruction would send a powerful message to other long-troubled parts of Africa that the international community will stand behind those who seize the opportunity for peace and who set the course for democracy and sustainable development.

With our concerted efforts, much has been accomplished. Yet a great deal still is needed to meet the immediate humanitarian

requirements and lay the groundwork for Liberia's long-term recovery and development.

The Results Focused Transition Framework, which will be formally presented to us during these proceedings, identifies the priorities for the critical next two years.

Together, we must continue to provide relief and support the resettlement, rehabilitation and reintegration of displaced persons, refugees and former combatants. And we must put special emphasis on female ex-combatants, and, especially, on child soldiers.

As someone who served almost his entire adult life in the career military, the fate of Liberia's child soldiers moves me deeply. These boys and girls have known more horrors in their young lives than anyone, let alone a child, ever should have to endure. Children were recruited by force, torn from their homes, deprived of an education, made to perform forced labor. They were drugged, beaten. The girls often were raped and subjected to sexual servitude.

The children were taught to fight. They were made to kill. The children became both victims and victimizers. Now, the vast majority of these children want desperately to leave these nightmare pasts behind them. They want to find their families if they are still alive. They want to go to school. They want to escape poverty. They want to make something of themselves. We must help these children. If we help these deeply traumatized children to live in hope, then there is also hope for Liberia.

Indeed, we must bring fresh faith in the future to a country that for too long has lived in hopelessness.

And we must help the rule of law to a Liberia, help bring the rule of law to a Liberia that for decades has known only lawlessness. Accountability must prevail. We must stand ready to work with Liberians as they grapple with how best to bring justice to their land and achieve liberty through law.

We must help the Liberians strengthen their civil society, establish accountable institutions, and create independent media as checks against corruption.

We must assist in the preparation of free and fair presidential elections and congressional elections scheduled for October 2005. We must foster the successful completion of Liberia's transition to a genuinely representative and responsive government.

The health, education, forest and farming sectors must be rebuilt.

The security sector must be reformed under civilian control to protect Liberia's territorial integrity.

For our part, the United States has already provided nearly \$90 million to address the latest humanitarian crisis in Liberia as well as the needs of Liberian refugees who have fled to neighboring countries. Our food aid through the World Food Program has helped to feed hundreds of thousands of Liberians. And our support for international relief organizations and non-governmental organizations has helped to meet Liberia's pressing needs for water, sanitation, health, and shelter.

Beyond our ongoing humanitarian help, to date the United States has contributed \$8.5 million to train and equip civilian police. \$4 million has gone to the United Nations Development Program and to support the operation of the Transitional Government. \$21 million has gone for assistance to ECOWAS peacekeepers.

And I am pleased to confirm today that the United States Congress has appropriated an additional \$200 million in humanitarian and reconstruction aid and another \$245 million for United Nations Peacekeeping operations in Liberia.

The presence here today of United States Congressmen Amo Houghton of New York and Don Payne of New Jersey, Amo Houghton of New York, both dear friends of mine and committed lovers of Africa and Africans, demonstrate the serious and determined bipartisan support that we enjoy in the Congress for our efforts and their commitment to the long-term success of our efforts.

I hope that our own and other contributions will help prompt a broadened, substantial international response in the form of funds, technical assistance and active diplomatic engagement. Having helped Liberia to this hopeful point of peace, we as a world community now must be prepared to commit ourselves to the long, hard process of Liberia's recovery and reconstruction.

Ultimately, of course, it is up to the Liberians themselves to seize or to squander this moment.

Our new colleague, Chairman Bryant, the leader of Liberia's Transitional Government, has committed his administration to quote "scrupulously and meticulously" implement the peace agreement and make it irreversible. Now is the time for all parties to join in supporting the peace agreement, not to scheme against it. Now is the time for all to meet their obligations under the Accra accords, not to obstruct the peace process.

We welcome the fact that Chairman Bryant also has made the establishment of good relations with Liberia's neighbors a top priority. We call upon neighboring countries to do everything they can to support the Liberian peace process. A peaceful, democratic, prosperous Liberia is crucial to stability and well-being throughout the entire region.

For too long, the countries of West Africa have suffered from deeply interconnected crises and conflicts that have common roots in corruption and criminality. Now, West African countries must grasp the opportunities to form healthy ties of commerce and cooperation that will help them address the ills that have led to past violence.

With great eloquence, Chairman Bryant has called upon the citizens of Liberia to join him in making "a new beginning" for their country. He has pledged to practice transparent, honest, accountable and fiscally sound governance. And he already has begun to take concrete steps in that direction.

Achieving political stability will be just as crucial to Liberia's getting a good start on the road to democracy and development as establishing conditions of physical security. Chairman Bryant has announced his intention to pursue a "pro-people policy." He acknowledges that the Transitional Government must earn the confidence of citizens, and they do that by addressing pressing issues of human rights and social welfare throughout the country as basic security is restored.

Not only must the Transitional Government earn the confidence of the Liberian people, it must also begin soon to adopt the governmental, legal, social, economic and environmental reforms that can earn the confidence of traders and investors. In Liberia, as in other developing countries across the globe, private capital will be the driver of development.

We encourage the World Bank and the rest of the international community to promote Liberia's own private sector. At the same time, we call upon the Liberian Transitional Government to liberalize foreign trade and investment opportunities in Liberia.

I am glad that many private organizations here in the United States and around the world are supporting Liberia's recovery and reconstruction. Last night, for example, the Leon Sullivan Foundation hosted a corporate dinner for Chairman Bryant's delegation. The Corporate Council on Africa and others

will do the same in Washington next week. And the vibrant Liberian-American community can and must play a greater role in Liberia's recovery and development.

My colleagues, the histories of the United States and Liberia have been bound together since the earliest days of both of our nations. Tragically, the cruel bonds of slavery formed our first ties with Liberia's forebears. And in the early decades of the 19th century, it was the dream of shaping their own destinies in freedom that brought Liberia's founders back from America to Africa to build a new homeland. Today, at the beginning of the 21st century, Americans and Liberians enjoy warm ties of kinship, commerce and a common commitment to freedom.

As Liberia's best and oldest friend, the United States will stand by Liberia as her citizens rebuild their country and move forward on a path of democracy and development.

Together with our partners in the international community, we will help the people of Liberia build a country ruled by a constitution, and not by kleptocrats.

We will help the Liberians build a country where children carry schoolbooks and not AK-47s.

We seek a Liberia whose timber does not fuel the fires of war and whose diamonds are not dripping with blood. We want to see Liberia's great natural wealth invested in its most precious resource, its citizens, not used to fund endless conflict.

Together, we will support Chairman Bryant and the men and women of Liberia as they transform their country into a place where respect for human rights, good governance and economic opportunity are the norm and stability at home is matched by peace in the region.

On behalf of President Bush, I wish to thank the members of the world community for your contributions to Liberia's future. I can assure you of America's strong commitment to work with you as together we help the people of Liberia seize what might well be their last, best chance for peace, prosperity and democracy.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

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AEF504 02/06/2004

Powell Discusses African Issues After Donors' Conference

(He responds to questions February 6 in New York) (3080)

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell held a round table on African issues February 6 in New York, following the Liberian donors' conference held at the United Nations.

Following is the transcript of the round table:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of the Spokesman

For Immediate Release

February 6, 2004

2004/133

Interview

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell

Roundtable on African Issues

February 6, 2004

New York, New York

(12:15 p.m. EST)

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, the U.S. sent troops to Liberia, and now you are leading the daughter of reform. You have not taken criminal action for all the African crises, such as the DRC.

SECRETARY POWELL: Such as?

QUESTION: The DRC. Democratic --

QUESTION: Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC.

SECRETARY POWELL: Oh, DRC.

QUESTION: Yeah.

SECRETARY POWELL: Sorry.

QUESTION: What makes Liberia so special? And will you be similarly committed to all the African nations in the future?

SECRETARY POWELL: Liberia is somewhat unique in that it was established by American slaves, as you well know, in the 19th century, and there has always been this historically cultural connection to the United States. Monrovia is named after an American President. Liberia means liberated from slavery in the United States. So there's always been this connection. And Liberia was never a colony of one of the European powers, so we felt a certain connection to it.

This doesn't mean, however, that we are indifferent to other crises in Africa. We have financed a great deal of the work in Sierra Leone. We are now looking for money to assist with the peacekeeping operation in Cote D'Ivoire. We have been deeply involved in the DRC and helping it to resolve its conflict. We've stayed in touch with President Kabila and President* Nsibambi in Uganda. We are deeply involved in trying to resolve the conflict in the Sudan and we are trying to play a good role in the problem between Ethiopia and Eritrean border.

So I think the United States' record of this Administration is quite good. And it is not just a matter of resolving conflicts. It's the money we're putting into HIV/AIDS, which is the greatest conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the new organization that we just created and I've chaired the first meeting of, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, is putting huge amounts of money into undeveloped countries. So I think the United States' record in Africa is quite good in this Administration, and I think it will get better as these new monies start to flow.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, the Administration has made clear that there's a concern about al-Qaida and terrorist links in various parts of Africa, and one of those places, Somalia, there's been some discussion about U.S. efforts to possibly make a push to create a functional government. Where does that stand, at a high --

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, as you know, there was some progress recently on coming -- Somalians coming together and to form a government. We would very much like to see a government formed, a responsible government that can govern this ungovernable country that's been ungovernable for a long time. I have more than a passing interest in this. As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, we sent peacekeeping and rescue forces in there in late 1992 to stop the starvation, end the starvation, which we did, then it turned into a more tragic situation when we weren't able to solve the political problem.

So we would be willing to play a role in moving this forward, and I think we have been playing a helpful role. But ultimately the Somalians have to figure out whether or not they're going to rally behind this new political arrangement or continue to allow conflict to take place based on clan and sub-clan loyalties. And I hope this new initiative will be a success.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) of Nigeria. What would be your assessment of the current democratic situation in Nigeria with the second term of the new president, just as an example, are you impressed? Do you think that the Nigerian Government participated in the democratic process?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, you've had two elections. I monitored the first election, the election that brought President Obasanjo into office. Myself and President Carter were part of that election, election group. I think that President -- the President has made progress but I think there's

much more to be done with respect to ending corruption, with respect to transparency in government. And we have spoken openly and directly to our Nigerian friends about it. We have good relations with Nigeria.

We would like to see better conditions for attracting trade and investment in Nigeria. And Nigeria still has a long way to go. But I think that the President knows what he has to do, and he has made progress during his first term. And I'm confident he will make progress during his second term.

QUESTION: You've spoken about the importance of peace in Liberia, for the region, as you were saying, but I just wondered in particular about the Ivory Coast. It appears that there is strong opposition from the United States about (inaudible).

SECRETARY POWELL: It's not the concept of peacekeeping. We know that has to be done. And we know that the UN should play a role and there should be a UN peacekeeping force. We are discussing with the UN peacekeeping authorities, as well as our friends in the UN, other countries in the UN Security Council on how large that force should be. There are limits to how many peacekeeping forces we're able to support at any one time, and there are other demands that we know are coming our way.

In addition to Cote d'Ivoire and what we're doing in Liberia, if we get a settlement in Sudan, which I think is likely if we can solve the problem of Abyei, which I think you're all familiar with, then there will be another requirement there for 8- to 10,000 UN monitors, so another bill. And we have finite -- believe it or not -- we have finite resources. So we want to make sure that we are sizing these missions properly, and that's what the discussion is.

QUESTION: Are you committed to sending some amount, or are you sending people too?

SECRETARY POWELL: Money. No, our -- no, in Cote d'Ivoire, I think it's, for us it's a matter of finance, not troops.

QUESTION: I mean --

SECRETARY POWELL: It's just that I don't think anybody's asking for or is in need of U.S. troops. There are troops available. It's a matter of financing them.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, it seems that when his country was picked up, not only it's like a (inaudible) dimension, I mean, when there is a conflict there is conflict everywhere, it seems like that.

But it seems, also, to me that "democracy" is a word that still we do not understand or the head of government. And they don't have a vision of what a state can be and corruption. I'm sorry to say that, but it's really the big problem. So how do you expect to address those problems? Because you're giving money to Liberia. But should not it be the head of government who should take care of, I mean, Africa and whatever, and not foreign government take care of, you know, ourselves?

SECRETARY POWELL: We have to help Liberia with foreign assistance right now. We'll make sure we know where the assistance is going. We are no longer in an environment where I can just go to the Congress and say, give me \$200 million and we're just going to give it to Liberians to do what they want with it. So we will watch where the money's going.

But this is a country that, at the moment, almost has no income. The bureaucracy, you know, they're in buildings that have no desks, offices with no phones. So a lot of money is required right now to get Liberia up and started, and I'm very impressed by Chairman Bryant and his commitment to get this going. We knew it would be difficult.

We, in our foreign policy, are making it clear to all of the nations that we work with that we will start holding them to higher standards of accountability, not just in Africa -- the Eastern

European nations that come to see me, the Central Asian nations, the nations from my own hemisphere, in the western hemisphere, we say to them, "If you want to have good relations with us, but more importantly, if you want us to help you, you have to show us the rule of law, you have to show us fair elections, you have to show us the end of corruption."

Corruption destroys democracy. You cannot have a democracy if the people see that their money is thrown away. And one important tool we're going to have is the new Millennium Challenge Account. Everybody now wants to be in line to receive money from the Millennium Challenge Account.

I'm going to have a billion dollars this year, and every year it's going to go up so that when it's fully funded -- in about three years, I think it is -- \$5 billion every year will be available. And guess what? You don't have the rule of law, you can't convince us that you are running your country in a non-corrupt manner, or you are throwing the media in jail, or you are not allowing companies to operate openly and freely and with some expectation that their property and their investment will be protected, you won't be eligible.

I've already had many countries come to us and say, "We know we're not eligible now. What, what do we have to do? Tell us what we have to do to get eligible." We tell them. "This is what you have to do. Let me see a commercial code. Let me see you protecting human rights. Let me see you protecting women's rights. Let me see you getting rid of trafficking in persons. We want to see if you have any child soldiers on your side. Are you allowing terrorists to use your country," all the things that are destructive and corrosive to democracy, we will be measuring that.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, just generally to -- how do you make the case to Africa as a continent that, with the amount of money that's being spent in the rebuilding of Iraq that you can now say, "I'm sorry. We can't afford X number of thousand peacekeepers in your country," whether it's Ivory Coast or elsewhere on the continent? How do you make that case?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, it's not a hard case to make because it is not as if there are not peacekeepers around. It is not hard to find peacekeepers in a number of countries in the world if they can be equipped and financed and transported and sustained in the field. You don't need American soldiers to do this. American soldiers are peacekeepers right now in Iraq. American soldiers have been helping to keep the peace in Korea for the last, almost 50 years.

But for the kinds of peacekeeping missions that are taking place in Africa right now, we find countries that are anxious to do it and willing to do it. And we provide assistance, and as you know, some of the Nigerian troops that initially went into Liberia were trained by American programs, where we helped these countries that are willing to provide peacekeepers to gain the capability and the training needed, and the equipment needed and we are looking at expanding those programs to help other nations.

But we don't believe that it is the -- it's always the correct choice to ask Americans to do the peacekeeping when others are ready, willing and able. We have peacekeepers in Bosnia. We have peacekeepers in Kosovo. So we are doing a fair share.

QUESTION: Specifically, as regards to the numbers of the Ivory Coast?

SECRETARY POWELL: Yeah, there's an issue. Some people think as many as 6,400 to 7,000 might be needed and others think a lower number might be adequate. That's the debate that's taking place. It's a financing issue, of course.

QUESTION: But the French would love to switch from what, you know, (inaudible) to the UN --

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, I understand that. I mean, it's -- the United States has an armed force and France has an armed force that is expeditionary in nature. It has to be stationed in certain places like Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq, but it has to be ready to go other places. And you can't tie it down for long periods of time in peacekeeping activities.

Troops are also expensive, and for this reason, I'm sure that the French are anxious to spread the burden in Cote d'Ivoire. But I'm pleased that the French took the lead in solving the problem initially. And of course, as the United States has historic connections to Liberia, France has historic connections to the nations in Francophone Africa.

QUESTION: Talking about corruption, Mr. Secretary, an American company Haliburton, but as just (inaudible) the Nigerian Government about its (inaudible). How do you think this affects the kind of image that America is showing (inaudible) Nigeria, the way that other people look to America, as they once did. And we have a situation where an African company has cheated the government of (inaudible).

SECRETARY POWELL: Has what? Cheated?

QUESTION: Yes. (Inaudible) about \$2.5 million. How do you think that, you know, reconciles with the (inaudible) U.S. (inaudible)?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, we don't want to see any of our countries* cheated by a country in which they're investing. And we don't want to see any of our companies take advantage of a government of a country in which they are invested or located. We want to see no corruption and total transparency, not only for the government, but for our companies as well.

And so in this case, I don't know what the facts are, and because it is a case that is in litigation, I won't comment on it. I don't know who's right or who's wrong. Our Justice Department handles such matters. But we do not want -- we will not tolerate bad behavior on the part of American companies, just as we would not want to see bad behavior on the part of the government.

In this particular case of Haliburton, I'm not making that judgment because I don't know anything about the facts and it's for our Justice Department.

QUESTION: What does the U.S. think should now happen to former Liberian leader, Charles Taylor? Do you think he should face sanctions? Should he go straight to trial? And do you think it's more important for him, for example, to face justice rather than (inaudible)?

SECRETARY POWELL: I think he is still subject to justice of the type expected by the international tribunal. We supported the international tribunal and he's under charges, and it's a matter now between him and the tribunal.

Because of the crisis we were facing last year, Nigeria was willing to take Mr. Taylor with the understanding that Nigeria would then not find itself in difficulty from the international community or from the tribunal. And everybody accepted that at the time because we needed to end the violence in Liberia and it worked. And Mr. Taylor is isolated in Nigeria but he has not escaped the desire of the court to see him stand before the court. But right now, it's a matter between Mr. Taylor and the court.

QUESTION: What about sanctions?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, I don't -- the sanction of him?

QUESTION: Sanctions against Taylor, exactly.

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, I know that the Liberian Government and other governments are checking into his, his well -- his wherewithal, and to the extent that we can be helpful to the transitional government, we will do so.

QUESTION: But would you say that -- this is just a

follow-up, sir. Would you say that you agree then with Mr. Klein that the rebuilding can go ahead without too much trouble, even if he isn't brought to justice?

SECRETARY POWELL: I think Mr. Taylor is a spent force, and we want to keep him a spent force in isolation in Nigeria. He is still subject to the court and there are occasional reports that he might be meddling in Liberia politics. And every now and then, you'll read a report that he's trying to raise forces in Nigeria. But I have no reason to believe that that's an accurate report.

And so I don't see any reason why the rebuilding can't go ahead. It must go ahead. The rebuilding and the reconstruction and the disarmament will not be held hostage to Mr. Taylor's personal fortune, or lack thereof.

QUESTION: Secretary Powell, talking about NEPAD, you know, had a lot of comments on (inaudible) in NEPAD. What is it that you don't support?

SECRETARY POWELL: We support -- we think NEPAD is a good program, and we have tried to demonstrate in every way we can that we will provide the political support and as it, as it structures itself and gets further into its work, there will be other forms of support we can provide. But I think that we've tried to express to the originators of NEPAD, especially the South Africans and President Mbeki, our support of NEPAD.

QUESTION: Do you think -- talking about -- talking about (inaudible) in the conflict, do you believe that the two-year mandate is not (inaudible) for the economy, (inaudible) with nonmilitary (inaudible) elections; in another word, to put the country in the right track, it is not easily going to show?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, you know, you have to put deadlines on things. You have to have action-forcing deadlines. And two years is not a long period of time, but in my conversations with Chairman Bryant today he did not ask for more time. He is anxious to move. And he is anxious to have that deadline out there so that he can generate support for what he's doing now, and the kind of support that's being generated here at this meeting today.

Okay. Thank you.

QUESTION: Thank you.

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AEF505 02/06/2004

Bush to Meet With Liberia's Chairman Gyude Bryant at White House

(February 6 White House announcement) (150)

The White House announced February 6 that President Bush would meet with the chairman of Liberia's transitional government, Gyude Bryant, February 10 at the White House.

Following is the text of the announcement:

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

February 6, 2004

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

Visit by Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia Gyude Bryant

The President will meet with Chairman Gyude Bryant of Liberia at the White House on February 10 to discuss progress in implementing the Accra Agreement ending Liberia's civil war and establishing a transition government. They will also review the results of the February 5-6 Reconstruction Conference held in New York.

President Bush looks forward to underlining our

commitment to help create a democratic and prosperous future for Liberia after years of suffering.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF402 02/05/2004

Effort Under Way to Raise \$488 Million for Liberia

(Natsios: International community must help solidify peace) (670)
By Judy Aita

Washington File United Nations Correspondent

United Nations -- The international community must help Liberia seize the opportunity to change the course of its history from conflict and suffering to peace and prosperity, the head of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) said February 5, urging international donors to contribute close to \$488 million over the next two years to help Liberia rebuild from the ashes of its disastrous 14-year civil war.

"Not only do the people of Liberia deserve this, but the people of the region should benefit from this change. Liberia is the key to the future stability of West Africa," said USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios.

To sustain the long and arduous transition to peace and recovery, "the international community must take full advantage of the historic opportunity we now have to aggressively assist the Liberians in achieving their objectives," Natsios said.

"So for the well-being of Liberians -- and West-Africans as a whole -- the international community should make the difference it is capable of making by providing funding, support, and leadership to help the Liberians be successful -- successful in meeting the ardent desire of the people of Liberia for genuine lasting peace, national unity, reconciliation, as well as economic growth," he said.

Liberia already is a country rich in national and human resources, Natsios said. If the international community does its part, he said, it will provide "a new and critical resource -- hope."

The United States, the United Nations, and the World Bank are co-hosting a two-day International Reconstruction Conference on Liberia February 5 and 6. On the first day officials of the World Bank, the U.N. Development Program (UNDP) and other agencies presented the detailed "joint needs assessment plan" that outlined programs ranging from demobilizing combatants and helping them return home, providing schooling, and finding jobs to rebuilding roads, restoring electricity, reopening health centers, stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS, and organizing elections in 2005.

The second day of the conference will be a pledging session at the ministerial level, including U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia C. Gyude Bryant.

The monetary requirement for the two-year period is estimated at \$487.7 million, divided between \$243 million for 2004 and \$244.7 million for 2005. An additional \$179.1 million was requested for emergency humanitarian aid in a November 2003 appeal.

Natsios said that the key to Liberia's transition to peace and recovery is a successful disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration (DDRR) of combatants, some of whom are as young as 12 years old. If the DDRR fails, he said, "Liberia will remain an unstable, insecure state where people's lives will be constantly at risk and development hindered."

The USAID administrator also said that humanitarian

relief and development should be simultaneous to the extent possible, and there must be effective capacity-building to ensure the sustainability of development.

Mark Malloch Brown, UNDP administrator and chairman of the U.N. Development Group, said that the meeting was a critical milestone for the country.

"It is a crucial opportunity to help stabilize a region that has inevitably been affected by spillover.

But it is a fragile peace, and urgent action is now needed to help ensure that the gains that have been made towards Liberia's recovery are not reversed," Malloch Brown said.

The \$487.7 million does not reflect the totality of the needs likely to exist in the country today, the UNDP administrator said. Rather, it reflects what can realistically be achieved within the next two years given the limitations of security and time constraints in drawing up the assessment.

Malloch Brown also emphasized the importance of the DDRR. "The greatest threat today to renewed conflict," he said, "is young men with guns who have not been quickly disarmed and given alternative economic livelihoods."

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF302 02/04/2004

U.S. to Pledge \$200 Million to Liberia for Reconstruction, Says USAID Chief

(Adds to \$240 million for peacekeeping, Natsios tells FPC) (760)

By Jim Fisher-Thompson

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The U.S. Government will pledge \$200 million in reconstruction and development aid to Liberia, a country dismantled by 14 years of bloody civil war during which 250,000 people were killed and a further 1.4 million were displaced, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Andrew Natsios announced February 4.

Natsios was speaking at a press conference for foreign journalists held at the State Department's Foreign Press Center on the eve of a two-day International Reconstruction Conference on Liberia to be held at United Nations headquarters in New York. The United States, the United Nations and the World Bank, in collaboration with the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL), are sponsoring the conference. Liberian Foreign Minister Thomas Nimely joined Natsios at the Washington press conference.

Natsios said the new \$200 million pledge was in addition to \$245 million the U.S. Government has agreed to pay as its share of the U.N. Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) peacekeeping force. Now at 11,000 troops, the U.N. force is expected to reach 15,000 by March, which will make it the largest current U.N. peacekeeping force anywhere in the world.

"An enormous effort will be required by the international community to assist Liberia in conquering the obstacles that remain toward reconstruction. This is, however, the best opportunity the country has had in a very long time since the civil war started," Natsios told the foreign press. He added that the European Community (EU) had also pledged, in advance of the New York meeting, \$120 million over two years for reconstruction in Liberia.

Natsios noted that security would be a top priority in the new reconstruction plan for Liberia. "The most important thing to this [plan] is the security sector," he said. "If we do not do successful disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR) of former combatants, reconstruction is not

going work."

If that is not done, Natsios said, there will be several negative results: "Civilians won't feel secure enough to do what they have to do" to restore the country. "Secondly, one group or militia -- and they are usually connected to ethnic groups and parties -- will not disarm if the other groups do not do so because they will feel at risk without their arms to protect them. So the only solution is to disarm everyone and that is what the plan is."

Meanwhile, he added, "a whole generation has been lost in Liberia, particularly the children, in terms of school and health care, so rehabilitation and reintegration programming must repair the fabric of society that has been torn apart over the past 14 years."

Asked if he believed formation of a new Liberian defense force was important to the nation's future stability and prosperity, Natsios said, "The plan is to develop a new Liberia national army."

While noting that in some countries like Costa Rica a decision was made to abolish the military entirely, he stated that "that's not what's being planned" for Liberia. "The plan [for Liberia] is to construct a national military that is not dominated by one ethnic or religious group and that is balanced so that it truly is national."

Natsios emphasized that ultimately democracy is the real guarantor of security. "The reason that [men like] Charles Taylor and rebel movements around the world have currency in any country is because the country is not democratically governed in an honorable way.

"Why did Charles Taylor get support? Because people were very upset with the central government in Monrovia. If there hadn't been unrest in the countryside, he wouldn't have been able to recruit anyone."

Liberian Foreign Minister Nimely told journalists: "We do need hope ... and there is a lot of progress taking place on the ground in Liberia. Ten thousand [U.N.] troops have been deployed ... and the citizens of the country are very happy to receive" those peacekeepers. "The combatants are also extremely happy and ready to respond" to the DDRR efforts.

"The peace process in Liberia is irreversible," Nimely said, because there now exists a will on the national level to do what has to be done to ensure peace and stability. "All of the factions, civil society and political parties" are ensuring that transparency and good governance take place now to pave the way for elections set for October 2005, he said.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF303 02/04/2004

Congo River Basin Legislation Awaits President's Signature

(Conservation measure will help protect basin's environmental resources) (400)

Washington -- Legislation to protect dwindling forests of the Congo River Basin in Africa has cleared its final legislative hurdle and will soon be signed by President Bush, its chief author, U.S. Rep. Edward Royce (Republican of California), announced February 3.

Royce, chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa in the U.S. House of Representatives, has taken the lead on the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) bill, which had passed the House by unanimous vote in October 2003. After going to the Senate, where it was amended and passed, the CBFP bill was returned to the House where it again passed on February 3 with strong bipartisan support. It now goes to the president's desk for his signature.

"Congo basin forests are coming under growing pressures. Ten years ago, these forests were virtually untouched," Royce explained in a press release. "Today, logging operations are shrinking these forests." It is estimated that every year logging is deforesting areas twice the size of Rhode Island (2,500 square miles), warned Royce, who recently co-founded the International Conservation Caucus in the House to support the CBFP and other international efforts to promote conservation.

Launched in 2002 by Secretary of State Colin Powell, the CBFP is focused on eleven key landscapes in six countries. It aims to support a network of national parks and protected areas and well-managed forestry concessions.

"Sadly, the construction of logging roads is putting intense hunting pressure on wildlife. At current levels, unless we act, most species of apes, large antelope, and elephants will disappear from the Congo basin, with some becoming extinct," said Royce. The CBFP is working to combat illegal logging, poaching and other destructive activities while giving local populations an economic stake in the preservation of the forests, including through the creation of eco-tourism, which has great development potential for Africans.

"Conservation isn't easy. America led the world in establishing our tremendous national park system; it took great foresight and political commitment to make this a reality, which is often taken for granted," said Royce. "It will be a major challenge to establish and maintain effective regimes to control logging and hunting in the Congo basin, but it's a challenge that could be met with the unique experience and talents that the United States can provide."

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF102 02/02/2004

U.S. Commends Signing of Somalia Peace Agreement

(Urges Somalis of influence to do all within their power to keep momentum going) (340)

The United States has commended the January 29 agreement by influential Somalis to establish a new national parliament in Somalia and begin the process of electing a president.

"By signing this agreement, the Somalis have demonstrated their ability to overcome differences, increase their capacity to formulate workable compromises and begin reaching out to former adversaries in the interest of providing a way forward for the Somali people," State Department Spokesman Richard Boucher said in a January 31 statement.

Following is the Boucher statement:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of the Spokesman

January 31, 2004

Statement by Richard Boucher, Spokesman

Somalia Peace Agreement

The United States commends the signing of an agreement by influential Somalis to establish a new national parliament in Somalia and begin the process of electing a president. By signing this agreement, the Somalis have demonstrated their ability to overcome differences, increase their capacity to formulate workable compromises and begin reaching out to former adversaries in the interest of providing a way forward for the Somali people.

Somali citizens have suffered a great deal since the collapse of the central government in 1991. The United States

welcomes the efforts of influential Somalis in forming a new central government and in working together to improve the quality of life for all Somalis. Although the January 29 signing was a significant event, it is just one critical step in what will still be a long and difficult process. We urge Somalis of influence to do all within their power to ensure that momentum is not lost.

The United States also recognizes and appreciates the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), particularly the recent efforts of the President and Government of Kenya and Ugandan

President Museveni in reaching this agreement. We hope that all international observers will continue to play a positive role in this Somali peace process and support sustainable peace in Somalia.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF204 02/03/2004

Record-level Funding Sought for U.S. Peace Corps

(Increase comes as more countries request Peace Corps assistance) (660)

President Bush is asking Congress to provide more than \$400 million for Peace Corps operations in the 2005 budget, the largest amount ever sought for that agency. The Peace Corps' operating budget this year is \$323 million.

Over 7,500 Peace Corps volunteers are serving in 71 countries, and 20 more nations have pending requests for Peace Corps programs, according to a February 2 press release. Volunteers serve two-year tours of duty in participating nations, helping with projects related to agriculture, health, HIV/AIDS education and awareness, information technology, business development, the environment, and education.

The Peace Corps is a development agency, but "its larger purpose is to strengthen the bonds of friendship and understanding between Americans and the people of other cultures," according to the press release.

Following is the text of the release:

U.S. Peace Corps

Washington, D.C.

www.peacecorps.gov

News Releases

PRESIDENT BUSH ANNOUNCES 2005 BUDGET

ASKS CONGRESS FOR \$401 M FOR PEACE CORPS

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 2, 2003 - Today, President Bush unveiled his fiscal year 2005 budget, in which he asks Congress to provide the Peace Corps with \$401 million - the largest budget request ever made for the agency. Currently, the Peace Corps' operating FY 2004 budget is \$323 million, which includes a direct appropriation of \$308 million and a transfer of \$15 million for work on HIV/AIDS projects through the Global HIV/AIDS Initiative.

Today, 7,533 Americans are serving in the Peace Corps - the largest number of volunteers to serve overseas since 1974. Volunteers serve in 71 countries in projects related to agriculture, health, HIV/AIDS education and awareness, information technology, business development, the environment, and education. Moreover, the demand for Peace Corps volunteers overseas continues to increase, with more than 20 additional countries requesting Peace Corps programs and assistance. This past year, the Peace Corps began new programs by sending volunteers to Fiji, Albania, Chad, and Azerbaijan. The Peace Corps also plans on returning volunteers to China and Jordan in 2004. In addition, the Peace Corps is working on a new partnership with Mexico and this

year will send its first group of volunteers to the country to work in the areas of information technology, small business development, and science and technology.

The Peace Corps provides practical assistance to host countries by sharing America's most precious resource, its people. Through the work and contributions of its volunteers over the past 42 years, the Peace Corps has emerged as a model of success for encouraging sustainable development at the grass-roots level. However, the Peace Corps is much more than a development agency. Its larger purpose is to strengthen the bonds of friendship and understanding between Americans and the people of other cultures.

The men and women who serve as Peace Corps volunteers reflect the rich diversity of our country and represent some of the finest characteristics of the American people. Volunteers have a strong work ethic, a generosity of spirit, a commitment to service and an approach to problems that is both optimistic and pragmatic. They speak the local language and adopt the cultures and customs of the people they serve. In the process, volunteers share and represent the culture and values of the American people, earning respect and admiration for our country among people who may never meet another American.

Volunteer safety and security will continue to be the number one priority of the Peace Corps as the agency furthers its admirable record of service that is recognized around the world. The Peace Corps devotes significant resources to maximize the safety of volunteers and to ensure they are given the training, support, and information needed for a safe experience.

Since 1961, more than 170,000 volunteers have served in the Peace Corps. Volunteers must be U.S. citizens and at least 18 years of age. Peace Corps service is a two-year commitment.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF101 02/02/2004

FY 2005 Budget for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

(Strong commitment continues) (510)

The U.S. Department of State February 2 released a fact sheet on the budget for President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

The fact sheet notes that President Bush has budgeted \$2.8 billion in FY 2005 to combat global HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, more than any U.S. administration has ever devoted to the fight against these diseases.

Following is the text of the fact sheet:

(begin fact sheet)

February 2, 2004

The President's Fiscal Year 2005 Budget for the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

The President's Fiscal Year 2005 Budget Continues Strong Commitment to Fighting AIDS

OVERVIEW

-- The President has budgeted \$2.8 billion in FY2005 to combat global HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, more than any administration has ever devoted to the fight against these diseases.

-- \$1.45 billion will be available to carry out the massive focused program of integrating treatment, care and prevention to turn the tide of HIV/AIDS in 15 countries that are home to approximately 50 percent of the HIV infections in the world.

-- Another \$1.17 billion will be used for existing bilateral programs to support HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria programs

and research. The budget continues the President's pledge to provide \$200 million per year through 2008 in support of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

-- Keeping his promise of ramping up funding over five years, the President's FY2005 budget is 16 percent above FY2004 and 78 percent more than FY2003.

-- The FY2005 request represents an increase in spending on international HIV/AIDS assistance of 236 percent since the President took office in 2001.

The United States Remains the Leader in Global AIDS Funding

-- The President's Plan is the largest international health initiative ever to target a single disease.

-- The U.S. is continuing to show unprecedented global leadership and commitment in funding the global AIDS emergency. In 2002 and 2003, the U.S. gave international contributions greater than those of all other donor governments combined.

-- Assuming level funding by other donors, U.S. international contributions in 2004 will be approximately twice those of the rest of the world's donor governments combined.

-- President Bush has made fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic a priority of U.S. foreign policy. The President's Plan commits to a robust, 5-year, \$15 billion, multi-faceted approach to combating the disease by treating 2 million people, caring for 10 million and preventing 7 million new infections in 15 focus countries; continuing bilateral programs; and using multilateral approaches like the Global Fund.

U.S. Continued Support for the Global Fund

-- Supporting the promising work of the Fund, the U.S. has contributed \$623 million to date and has pledged a total of \$1.97 billion from the inception of the Fund through 2008 (with annual contributions not to exceed one-third of the total contributions to the Fund each year beginning in 2004).

-- The U.S. remains the largest donor to the Fund and accounts for 37.4% of total pledges and 31.1% of contributions as of January 30, 2004.

(end fact sheet)

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AEF508 02/06/2004

African-Americans Urged to Take Greater Role in Fight Against HIV/AIDS

(Blacks said to account in 2002 for over 50 percent of U.S. AIDS cases) (840)

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day is observed on February 7 in the United States, and one of the nation's top medical researchers is urging African Americans to recognize the risks of the disease and increase their involvement in efforts to find solutions. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases issued a statement February 5 from its director, Dr. Anthony Fauci, who said that African Americans in 2002 accounted for more than 50 percent of all AIDS cases in the United States even though they make up only 12 percent of the overall population.

Fauci said that medical researchers are testing 20 potential vaccines, but that enrollment of individuals from minority groups in clinical trials must be increased. "Overall, in both prevention and treatment clinical trials, minorities represent just over 30 percent of all trial participants, despite the fact that more than 65 percent of all new HIV/AIDS cases in the U.S. occur in minorities," he said.

"If we are to end the HIV pandemic in African Americans, African Americans must continue to be part of the solution, as clinicians, prevention providers, treatment advocates, researchers, and as HIV therapeutic and preventive vaccine clinical trial volunteers," Fauci said.

Following is the text of the Fauci statement:
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
National Institutes of Health
Thursday, Feb. 5, 2004

Statement of Anthony S. Fauci, M.D.
Director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
on National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day--February 7, 2004
Each year on National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day, our Nation reflects on the devastating impact HIV/AIDS continues to have on African Americans and renews its commitment to a world without AIDS.

Today we are unfortunately still far from that goal. By the end of 2002, an estimated 185,080 African Americans had died from AIDS, accounting for 37 percent of all AIDS-related deaths in the United States. Despite the fact that African Americans account for only 12 percent of the U.S. population, more than 50 percent of all AIDS cases in 2002 in the United States were among African Americans.

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, part of the National Institutes of Health, and our colleagues around the world are working to find new and better drugs and the best possible combinations of existing drugs to treat those already infected with HIV. But treatment is not a cure, and even those receiving treatment are still able to pass HIV to others.

Although there is no vaccine to prevent HIV infection, considerable effort is being directed toward the development of a safe and effective HIV vaccine. More than 20 candidate preventive HIV vaccines are being tested in clinical trials in the United States and worldwide. We do not know if any of these vaccine candidates will work until we test them, and we will not know if they work for everyone unless diverse populations, including African Americans, participate in these and future trials.

While participants in AIDS clinical trials are much more diverse than they were early in the epidemic, we need to increase our enrollment of individuals from minority groups in clinical trials. Overall, in both prevention and treatment clinical trials, minorities represent just over 30 percent of all trial participants, despite the fact that more than 65 percent of all new HIV/AIDS cases in the U.S. occur in minorities. In the only Phase III preventive HIV vaccine clinical trial conducted so far in the United States, fewer than 10 percent of the participants were African American.

Just as important as having African Americans participate as trial volunteers is having African American investigators conduct the research to find a vaccine and a cure. To put it simply, if we are to end the HIV pandemic in African Americans, African Americans must continue to be part of the solution, as clinicians, prevention providers, treatment advocates, researchers, and as HIV therapeutic and preventive vaccine clinical trial volunteers.

Every National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day is an opportunity to educate our communities about progress in prevention, care and treatment, and the need for a vaccine; however, these efforts should take place not only on this day. To those who already are involved in the struggle to end the AIDS pandemic: Be proud of yourselves, and share information about what you are doing with others. Strong role models are an important source for education and hope.

Today is not only a day to remember the past but also a

day to renew our passion to save lives and strengthen our determination to find solutions through research.

Dr. Fauci is the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. The National Institutes of Health is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF403 02/05/2004

Global Coalition Works to Protect Women, Girls from HIV/AIDS

(Studies find women, girls more vulnerable to infection) (1440)
The newly formed Global Coalition on Women and AIDS will work to better focus HIV prevention and protection efforts on women and girls. The Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) launched the new initiative February 2 in response to evidence that women are more vulnerable to infection, less able to protect themselves and less likely to receive treatment and care if they are infected.

The initiative comes in response to surveys that reveal women account for almost 60 percent of all HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa, the region of the world where the disease is most prevalent. Studies have also shown that young women aged 15 to 24 were 2.5 times more likely to be infected than were young men that age.

Women and girls' lack of power is the fundamental reason for these trends, according to a February 2 UNAIDS press release. They have less power in controlling sex and condom use in a relationship, and are thus less able to protect themselves from infection. In some cultures, girls and young women are likely to be forced into sexual activity.

"When women are infected with HIV they often face physical and emotional violence," said Ludfine Anyango, a woman living with HIV and National HIV/AIDS Coordinator of ActionAid Kenya. "As a result, they can be abandoned by their families and ostracized by their communities."

Biology is another reason for women's heightened vulnerability to infection. Male-to-female HIV transmission is estimated to be twice as likely as female-to-male transmission. With high-profile members such as British actress Emma Thompson and former Irish President Mary Robinson, the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS will work to improve social conditions for women and promote equal access to HIV care and treatment. The coalition also pledges to accelerate medical research into microbicides, an agent, in the form of an ointment or lubricant that would kill the AIDS virus, thus giving women greater control over their own protection.

The Web site for Global Coalition on Women and HIV/AIDS is a v a i l a b l e a t http://www.unaids.org/Unaids/EN/Events/Coalition_Women_and_AIDS.asp

UNAIDS has also produced a series of fact sheets that detail the particular vulnerabilities of women and girls. They are available at <http://www.unaids.org/en/media/fact+sheets.asp>

Following is the text of the press release:

Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

Press release

FEBRUARY 2, 2004

HIV PREVENTION AND PROTECTION EFFORTS ARE FAILING WOMEN AND GIRLS

More young women are becoming infected by husbands and long-term partners - female-controlled HIV prevention methods urgently needed

London - Existing HIV prevention and protection efforts are failing to stem infections among women and girls because they do not take into account such issues as gender relations and sexual behaviour, according to the United Nations AIDS programme.

"All too often, HIV prevention is failing women and girls," said Dr Peter Piot, Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Dr Piot was speaking at the launch of the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, a UNAIDS-initiated group of leading women and men committed to mitigating the impact of AIDS on women and girls worldwide. "Because of their lack of social and economic power, many women and girls are unable to negotiate relationships based on abstinence, faithfulness and use of condoms. It is precisely to address these inequalities and reduce women's vulnerability to HIV that the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS has been created."

Women are particularly vulnerable to HIV, with about half of all HIV infections worldwide occurring among women. This vulnerability is primarily due to inadequate knowledge about AIDS, insufficient access to HIV prevention services, inability to negotiate safer sex, and a lack of female-controlled HIV prevention methods, such as microbicides.

Women and girls are often powerless to abstain from sex or to insist on condom use. They may be coerced into unprotected sex or run the risk of being infected by husbands in societies where it is common or accepted for men to have more than one partner. Women are also biologically more vulnerable to infection; male-to-female HIV transmission is estimated to be twice as likely than female-to-male. In some of the regions worst-affected by AIDS, more than half of girls aged 15 to 19 have either never heard about AIDS or have at least one major misconception about how HIV is transmitted.

While condoms have been proven effective in HIV prevention, their correct and consistent use rests with the male partner, making it more difficult for women to negotiate safer sex. In fact, most sexually transmitted HIV infections in females occur either inside marriage or in relationships women believe to be monogamous. "The typical woman who gets infected with HIV has only one partner - her husband or steady boyfriend," said Oscar-winning actress Emma Thompson, an ambassador for ActionAid International. "Regardless of their relationship status women desperately need new HIV prevention tools that they can control."

A study in Zambia found that only 11% of women interviewed believed that a woman had the right to ask her husband to use a condom - even if he had proven himself to be unfaithful and was HIV-positive. Studies in the US suggest that many women infected by male partners were unaware the men had had multiple sex partners, sex with other men or that they injected drugs.

Violence, too, increases the danger of HIV infection among women. In certain places Cameroon, the Caribbean, Peru, and South Africa - between 20%-48% of girls aged 10- 25 reported that their first sexual encounter was forced. Fear of violence not only prevents women from accessing HIV/AIDS information, it prevents them from getting tested, disclosing their HIV status and receiving treatment and counselling, even when they know they have been infected. This is primarily due to the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS. "When women are infected with HIV they often face physical and emotional violence. As a result, they can be abandoned by their families and ostracised

by their communities," said Ludwine Anyango, a woman living with HIV and National HIV/AIDS Coordinator of ActionAid Kenya.

Women's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS is further exacerbated by unequal property and inheritance rights. In many countries property is usually owned by men - women only have rights through marriage. This radically reduces their economic security and can lead to women enduring abusive relationships or resorting to sex for economic survival. Women whose male partners die of AIDS are often left homeless as the property rights are passed on to relatives instead.

"It is crucial that HIV prevention programmes involve both women and men to effectively address gender inequality and reduce women's vulnerability to HIV," said Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and Executive Director of the Ethical Globalization Initiative. "Women's rights must be fully respected and protected if we want a realistic chance at reversing the spread of AIDS."

Another promising HIV prevention option for women lies in microbicide research. Formulated as a gel, film, sponge, lubricant or time-released suppository, a successful microbicide could help protect women and couples who cannot or do not use condoms against HIV. Researchers at the London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine estimate that a microbicide could prevent more than 2.5 million new HIV infections in only three years, even if it is 60% effective. To date, microbicide research is severely underfunded. Of the US\$775 million needed to test existing products in the pipeline, only US\$343 million is available.

The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS aims to be a highly-visible group of men and women, including activists, government representatives, community workers and celebrities, that seek to stimulate concrete action on the ground to improve the daily lives of women and girls. Its efforts will focus on preventing new HIV infections among women and girls, promoting equal access to HIV care and treatment, accelerating microbicides research, protecting women's property and inheritance rights and reducing violence against women.

Women comprise about half of all people living with HIV/AIDS. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 58 percent of those living with HIV were women as of end 2003 and young women aged 15 to 24 were 2.5 times more likely to be infected than young men.

For more information, please contact: Dominique De Santis, UNAIDS, London, mobile (+41 79) 254 6803 or Geneva (+41 22) 791 4509, Louise Coward, Ogilvy PR Worldwide, London, tel. +44 (0)207 309 1085. For more information about UNAIDS, please visit our website, www.unaids.org.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF301 02/04/2004

Majority of Africa's Child Deaths Linked to Environmental Factors

(Six African countries are basis for WHO child health initiative) (600)

Washington -- The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that up to 70 percent of children who die in Africa succumb to diseases linked directly or indirectly to environmental risk factors. These include respiratory infection, diarrhea, measles, malaria, HIV/AIDS and malnutrition.

The major classes of environmental risks for African children, according to a February 3 WHO news release from Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, are inadequate access to safe

drinking water, poor hygiene and sanitation, disease vectors, air pollution, chemical hazards and unintentional injuries.

In the release, WHO says a technical consultation to review the national profiles on the status of children's environmental health in six African countries will take place February 4-6 in Cape Town, South Africa, hosted on behalf of the

WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO) by the Medical Research Council of South Africa.

The national profiles were developed in six countries -- Benin, Ethiopia, the Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Seychelles and Zimbabwe -- with the support of the Swedish Expertise Fund. The information gathered from these six countries will be used to design interventions for implementing WHO's Healthy Environments for Children Initiative in the African Region.

Some 20 percent of children born in Africa may not live to see their fifth birthday, and many who survive are not likely to live to develop their full potential because of long-term disorders.

The three-day Cape Town meeting will review the methods for assessing the impact of environmental threats on children's health in Africa, evaluate the results of the national profiles initiative and make concrete proposals for addressing the needs identified.

The national profiles will provide an overview on the status of children's environmental health and identify the key threats and adverse effects suffered by the most vulnerable groups. The profiles will also show what actions have been or are being taken by different sectors within each country and will help countries identify challenges and propose solutions.

WHO will also launch a new publication at this event, "Making a difference: indicators to improve children's environmental health," which forms an important part of the organization's worldwide effort to monitor and address environmental risks to children's health.

WHO officials say that for the first time, public health officials will have a set of tools at their disposal to assess the risks from and take timely actions to prevent irreparable damage to children from environmental hazards. The new indicators, for example, will help public health officials monitor children's exposure to air pollution by tracking the percentage of children living in homes using biomass fuels for cooking and the annual exposure of children to outdoor air pollution.

The percentage of children living in households without basic services for water supply, hygiene and sanitation will be monitored as an indication of the dangers from unsafe drinking water and inadequate sanitation and hygiene. The same approach is replicated for all major environmental risks to children's health.

"Often, to assess accurately how environmental hazards affect a child's -- or anyone's -- health, you need a combination of actions. Both the national profiles on children's environmental health and the indicators will give health officials the world over a standardized and comprehensive means of tracking and addressing environmental health risks," said Margaret Chan, director of the Department for the Protection of the Human Environment at WHO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

The indicators are currently being monitored in the Americas, Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Cape Town meeting will launch the monitoring of the indicators in Africa.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF306 02/04/2004

U.S. Committed to Prevention of Genocide, Official Says (Sanctions and education key tools) (1370)

In a January 26 speech to the Stockholm International Forum, Pierre-Richard Prosper, Ambassador-at-large for War Crimes Issues, said that the United States will work with the international community to make certain that all countries guard against genocide and "those who would exterminate liberty and innocent life."

Noting the importance of taking action to prevent genocide before it begins, rather than simply intervening once it has taken place, Prosper said the international community "must maximize the use of diplomatic and humanitarian tools to prevent genocide from ever occurring, rather than simply trying to stop it in its course."

In addition, Prosper suggested that states target those who might commit genocide by applying what he called "appropriate and smart sanctions" such as visa bans and asset seizures against them.

Prosper noted, however, that the most important tool in the fight against genocide is education. "All who cherish freedom, value human dignity, [and] recognize the horror of the Holocaust, understand the seminal role of education to enlighten future generations," he said.

The following is a transcript of the ambassador's speech:
Diplomatic and Humanitarian Tools Prevent Genocide
Pierre-Richard Prosper, Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues

Remarks to the Stockholm International Forum

Stockholm, Sweden

January 26, 2004

Your Majesty, Royal Highness, Prime Minister, Secretary-General, Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a pleasure for me to be here in a city characterized by its historical role in developing and expounding international peace and justice. We thank Prime Minister Goran Persson and the Government of Sweden for hosting this important Forum. It is the hope of the U.S. here that we can hone our tools towards a shared objective: creating an environment where the innocent are protected and those who disregard human life face resolute justice.

This morning we saw a recital that was moving and underscored the tragic and terrible history we have experienced. It personally also brought back memories for me. My fellow delegates, as a UN prosecutor I had the duty to bring to life Lempkin's definition of genocide and secure the first ever conviction under the 1948 Convention. As a result I share Lempkin's observation that genocide anywhere affects us all. We have a duty to remedy this evil. The United States believes that our overarching responsibility must be to create conditions in the world where such catastrophes as the Holocaust, the killing fields in Cambodia, the Rwanda Genocide, and the over 25 years of the massive assault on humanity in Iraq will be put beyond the human imagination. There needs to be a coordinated approach that watches for signs of impending violence and reacts to it with diplomacy, humanitarian assistance, justice, force where appropriate, and education.

The United States is committed to working with the international community to ensure that every state fulfills its obligations to guard against those who would exterminate liberty and innocent life.

In the past, consideration of how to prevent genocide and mass atrocities has often been presented as a stark choice between forcible intervention the commitment of troops or standing aside in hope that it will stop. This is not acceptable. If we are facing this dilemma, then it is already too late. For if we are serious about preventing genocide, we will take action even before violence begins. We know that Genocide and mass atrocities do not arise spontaneously. They are the result of careful planning. They are the result of a breakdown in social fabrics and form part of political calculations. They are also the result of pure ethnic, racial, national, and religious hatred. Genocide leaves a recognizable trail that if addressed early is reversible. The U.S. agrees that we need an appropriate early warning system.

A growing number of academic and government officials many of whom are present here today have studied these phenomena, and have cited a number of factors that set the stage for atrocities. The United States is part of this effort, and has persons dedicated to studying trends in order to warn policy and decision makers with the hope of true and real prevention. These individuals closely monitor states that experience political, economic, or social upheaval. They monitor countries with poor human rights, countries who ignore the rule of law and have no freedom of the press. They watch countries that disengage from the international community and disregard the welfare/life of vast segments of their population. We must find an appropriate way to bring our efforts together.

As we see such situations, the United States believes our duty is to engage early with diplomatic and humanitarian action. We must maximize the use of diplomatic and humanitarian tools to prevent genocide from ever occurring, rather than simply trying to stop it in its course. Each state must recognize its responsibility to properly regulate its territory and must recognize the consequences of inaction. Regions must see they have a duty to support the rule of law and engage neighbors bilaterally as well as through regional agreements and institutions. This involves sending strong messages of rebuke and involves raising a bilateral disapproval into a multilateral condemnation. Consequences must be made clear. We should not hesitate to be firm. We should not hesitate to withhold assistance. We should not hesitate to levy appropriate and smart sanctions targeting individuals who plant the seeds of genocide using visa bans, asset seizures, and other means. Additionally, we should maintain standards for entry into regional and multinational institutions and make clear that entry is a privilege, not a right. And of course, offenders need to know, if they commit these crimes, they will face justice.

Since the Nuremberg trials, we have all worked to create a framework of principles to secure the rule of law and hold perpetrators accountable. The United States believes that we must fortify these principles by encouraging states to pursue credible justice and come to terms with their pasts. We all must assist states in such efforts by providing as needed the technical, financial and human resources. We must not tolerate abdication of the responsibility to pursue justice at home. We must not tolerate the lack of political will. Hard experience has taught us that lasting peace and democracy can only be achieved where there is justice and accountability justice that touches society, has its acceptance, and ideally the participation, of the local community. Sadly, we must recognize there will be, despite our efforts, outbreaks of atrocities. We now know that these occasions may call for use of force. This must be done as required but at all times with forethought. This calls for contingency planning within governments and collaboration amongst states. The burden to act should not fall on one country and no country is exempt from this responsibility.

Countries must determine how to fulfill their respective responsibilities by examining what they have to offer in terms of contributing military personnel, providing logistical support, or helping with political and financial assistance. Primary responsibility should fall to states in the affected region and then as necessary, to the broader international community.

While we talk of steps of prevention, nothing replaces education. All who cherish freedom, value human dignity, recognize the horror of the Holocaust understand the seminal role of education to enlighten future generations. This Forum and its predecessors have contributed to raising awareness and have led to useful initiatives such as the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. It is efforts like these that leaves us to understand we must as Elie Wiesel stated here for years ago, transform information into knowledge, knowledge into understanding, understanding into sensitivity. A sensitivity that leads to an understanding that each human life has value and that every ethnical, racial, national, and religious group makes a contribution to the world. We benefit from our diversity. Humanity is enriched by our differences. The United States stands ready to work with you to break this cycle of violence. My delegation looks forward to working with you during this Forum to find solutions and lay the groundwork which will truly allow us to say, never again.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF307 02/04/2004

Bush Proclaims National African American History Month 2004

(He says new museum will commemorate African Americans' achievements) (660)

Washington -- President Bush said that in recognition of "the heritage and accomplishments of African Americans [and] their extraordinary contributions to the United States," the month of February 2004 is proclaimed "National African American History Month."

In a White House news release of the proclamation issued February 4, the president noted his signing of legislation "establishing the National Museum of African American History and Culture as a part of the Smithsonian Institution" to commemorate the triumphs of African Americans and "their determination in overcoming the evil of slavery ... and their many achievements."

He said the month will be observed by "appropriate programs and activities that highlight and honor the contributions African Americans have made to our Nation."

Following is the text of the presidential proclamation:

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

February 4, 2004

**NATIONAL AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH, 2004
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
A PROCLAMATION**

During National African American History Month, we honor the heritage and accomplishments of African Americans and recognize their extraordinary contributions to the United States.

African Americans have upheld the ideals of America, defended our homeland, and enriched American culture and society. Brave leaders such as Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman,

Booker T. Washington, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Leon Sullivan caused America to examine its heart and to respect the dignity and equality of all people, regardless of race. Today, African Americans are leaders at the highest levels of the military, business, education, law, government, the arts, sports, and religion.

To help share the stories of the millions of African Americans who have strengthened our country, I recently signed legislation establishing the National Museum of African American History and Culture as a part of the Smithsonian Institution. This museum will commemorate the triumphs of African Americans -- their determination in overcoming the evil of slavery and discrimination and their many achievements and contributions to our Nation.

This year's National African American History Month celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. In that landmark decision, the Supreme Court declared an end to the shameful and unconstitutional practice of legal segregation in schools, ruling unanimously that the Constitution requires all Americans to be treated equally without regard to the color of their skin. The *Brown* decision transformed America and fulfilled the principles of our Constitution. This year, we remember the brave schoolchildren and parents who challenged segregation. We recognize the legal and moral advocates who paved the way for this decision, including Thurgood Marshall, the heroic lawyer who represented Linda Brown and fought for her rights and the rights of all African Americans. We remember the nine justices of the Supreme Court who helped America begin to make equal justice under law a reality for African Americans. Nearly 50 years after *Brown*, we are grateful for the progress America has made, but we also recognize that there is still work to be done to ensure that our country lives up to the

founding principle that all of God's children are created equal.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim February 2004 as National African American History Month. I call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities that highlight and honor the contributions African Americans have made to our Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF506 02/06/2004

Americans, Africans Share Common Spirituality, Rep. Royce Says

(President Bush, African guests attend National Prayer Breakfast) (650)

By Jim Fisher-Thompson

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- After many trips to and through Africa, during which he met people from all levels of society from farmers to heads of state, Representative Ed Royce (Republican of California) says he is always struck by Africans' spirituality or reliance on a higher power -- a characteristic he believes they share with Americans.

"This is one of the things we always notice when we travel to the continent," the chairman of the House Africa Subcommittee told the Washington File after attending the 52nd Annual Prayer Breakfast in Washington February 5. "And I think the recognition of the importance that God plays in our lives is a common bond between Africans and Americans."

After listening to the Watoto Children's Choir of Kampala, Uganda, President George Bush urged the attendees at the breakfast, as well as all Americans, "to recognize our dependence on God and pray with one voice for his blessings."

A number of high-level African officials and their wives were featured among the 4,000 people at the faith event, first started by Congress in the early 1950s. Liberian Chairman Gyude Bryant and his wife Rosie Lee, Ugandan Prime Minister Apollo Nsubambi, Rwandan Minister of Foreign Affairs Charles Murigande, and Tanzanian Minister of State Wilson Masilingi were among the 15 Africans who joined lawmakers from the House and Senate and high-ranking members of the military and the administration, as well as spiritual leaders of all faiths, at the early morning event.

Royce, who met Tanzanian Minister of State Masilingi at the event, said, "I think Africans and Americans rely on God for strength. All of us have experienced adversity and we take a great deal of solace in our faith."

As for how his faith affects his job as a lawmaker, Royce said, "I think many people in decision-making positions in this country, including in government, do ask for wisdom and guidance from God and I think it is an important part of our national character, and it plays an important part in the character of Africans."

Royce said: "The keynote messages at the breakfast were by two African-American congressmen who have made a mark on Congress, Representative John Lewis [Democrat of Georgia] and former Representative J.C. Watts [Republican of Oklahoma]. Each spoke of the grace and strength God gives all of us to help us cope with life's ups and downs and of the importance of reconciliation and forgiveness.

"That is a powerful message," Royce said, adding, "I think the president also captured that sentiment when he said, 'Let us never be too proud to acknowledge our dependence on Providence and take our cares to God.' That struck a note with me."

Royce also said he was greatly moved by the Ugandan choir, "which sang traditional Ugandan songs and were so enthusiastic and so full of joy. The choir was exceptional, and the president, who had heard them sing twice before, said: 'Their voices carry a message of hope and joy. These boys and girls have known great sadness and loss. We're so glad, so glad they could be with us here this morning.'"

In keeping with the spirit of reconciliation, the State Department allowed Libya's ambassador to the United Nations, Ali Abd al-Salam al-Turayki, to come to Washington, where he had been invited by Congress to attend the Prayer Breakfast. Ambassador Turayki, as well as other U.N. envoys from states like Cuba that have strained relations with the United States, must have permission to travel outside of New York City, where the U.N. is located.

General John Abizaid, an Arab-American who is chief of the U.S. Central Command, closed the breakfast with the Muslim salutation "As-Salaam Alaikum," or "Peace be with you."

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

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